

reading said individual identification information and said group value information in response to a usage request for said electronic storage medium;

*A1
cmld* checking one of said plurality of groups if the individual identification information on the electronic storage medium is registered therewith, said one of plurality of groups corresponding to said group value information that was read; and

judging that the requested electronic storage medium is invalid if said individual identification information corresponding thereto is found, and judging that the requested electronic storage medium is valid if said individual identification information corresponding thereto is not found.

*A2
cm't* 3. (Amended) A card system comprising:
a plurality of cards each having unique identification information;
a card management system for issuing and managing said cards; and
a card application unit, connected to said card management system, for reading data from the card in response to a usage request;
said card including the individual identification information and group value information identifying a group to be searched,

said management system comprising card issuance and management means for issuing and managing said cards, creation means for creating a hot list listing invalid cards, and communication means for communicating with said card application unit via the communication line,

A2
cncl- said card application unit including means for reading the individual identification information and the group value from the card, means for creating a by-group list from the hot list distributed from the card management system via the communication line, said by-group list grouped by the group value, invalid card checking means for checking if said card that was read is invalid, card processing means for processing the card based on a result of said invalid card checking means, and communication means for communicating with said card management system via the communication line.

9. (Amended) A method for issuing a new card in a card management system, the method comprising the steps of:

A3 preparing a plurality of groups corresponding to group values as card classification information;

examining an invalid card occurrence ratio of said group values for the cards already issued; and

issuing the new card to be assigned with one of the group values other than the group value with the highest invalid card occurrence ratio.

15. (Amended) A card comprising:
individual identification information assigned to
the card; and
group value information assigned to said card, said
group value information being one of a plurality of values
prepared for classifying the cards,

wherein said group value information specifies a
group value part to be searched on a list listing invalid
cards classified into said plurality of values.

16. (Amended) A card management system wherein a
plurality of group values are prepared as card classification
information, said system comprising:

a hot list creation unit which creates a hot list
containing at least individual identification information for
each of invalid cards;

a storage unit for storing said hot list; and

a card issuance and management unit which reads said
hot list from said storage unit, finds the group value
assigned to each of said invalid cards, checks an invalid card
occurrence ratio of each group value, and issues a new card
assigned to are of the group values other than the group value
with the highest invalid card occurrence ratio.

19. (Amended) A method for detecting invalid cards in a card system, the method comprising the steps of:

preparing a plurality of groups corresponding to group values as card classification information;

holding a list listing individual identification information on invalid cards, said list being used for the detection and grouped by said group values;

reading a pair of the individual identification information and the group value information assigned to the card to be examined;

checking if the individual identification information read in said reading step matches any of the individual identification information on the invalid cards of the corresponding group value information listed on said detection list; and

based on a result of said checking, judging if said card to be examined is invalid.

21. (Amended) A computer-readable recording medium which is for use in a card management system and which stores thereon a program, the program comprising the steps of:

preparing a plurality of groups corresponding to values as card classification information;

examining an invalid card occurrence ratio of each group value for the cards already issued; and

issuing the new card to which the group value other than the group value with the highest invalid card occurrence ratio is assigned.

22. (Amended) A computer-readable recording medium which is for use in a card management system and which stores thereon a program, the program comprising the steps of:

*Ab
emend.* preparing a plurality of groups corresponding to group values as card classification information;

creating a holding list listing individual identification information on the invalid cards, said list being used for the detection and grouped by said group values;

reading a pair of individual identification information and the group value information assigned to the card to be examined;

checking if the individual identification information read in said reading step read matches any of the individual identification information listed on the invalid cards of the corresponding group value information listed on said detection list; and

based on a result of said checking, judging if said card to be examined is invalid.

REMARKS

Applicants have amended the independent claims to clarify the subject matter to which the invention pertains.